

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2007EDU0116-001093  
Sept. 6, 2007

Ministry of Education

### FUNDING TO SUPPORT LIFELONG LEARNING

VICTORIA – In support of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Victoria Lifelong Learning Festival, the Province has invested \$35,000 to help raise awareness and encourage residents to become lifelong learners, Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell and Community Services Minister Ida Chong announced today.

“The Victoria Lifelong Learning Festival encourages community members of all ages to continue their learning and acquire new skills through different programs offered in the Victoria area,” said Chong. “It helps the public to look beyond traditional educational institutions for learning.”

“Recent studies show that more than one million adult British Columbians do not have the skills necessary to read a newspaper or to fill out a job application,” said Coell. “Lifelong learning is essential to maintaining adequate literacy levels as you move through life.”

The festival kicks-off at the Bay Centre on Saturday, Sept. 8, 2007, to coincide with International Literacy Day. Following the festival is Lifelong Learning Week, Sept. 10-15, 2007, with numerous open houses throughout week at recreation centres, libraries, the downtown plaza and educational institutions. Activities include craft workshops, morning bird walks and informational slideshows.

The City of Victoria initiated the Lifelong Learning Festival in an effort to develop Victoria as a Learning Community. This year’s festival will continue to build on the promotion of lifelong learning with entertainment and activities, including creative writing workshops for kids, info booths, and martial arts and dance demonstrations.

“We are thrilled with the support from the Province for this year’s Lifelong Learning Festival,” said City of Victoria Councillor Helen Hughes. “Learning is not limited to formal education; it is something we should strive to pursue throughout our lives.”

“Encouraging lifelong learning in adults is important for their health and well-being and promotes critical thinking and working to create positive changes within the community,” said Education Minister Shirley Bond. “Community initiatives, like this one, bring us one step closer to making British Columbia the best-educated, most-literate jurisdiction on the continent.”

- 2 -

This initiative also supports ReadNow BC, the Province's literacy action plan to improve reading skills among British Columbians. ReadNow BC is designed to increase awareness of B.C.'s literacy challenge and increase access to resources and programs that will ensure all British Columbians have opportunities to improve their literacy skills. Since 2001, the Province has dedicated \$106 million to literacy initiatives.

-30-

Media      Lara Perzoff  
contact:    Public Affairs Bureau  
              Ministry of Education  
              250 356-5963  
              250 920-9040 (cell)

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca).